

Anselm's college; Marie Kirn, executive director of the New Hampshire Hospice Association.

This is a group that is dedicated to saving our Medicare Program, and they are not interested in political rhetoric. They want results, and that is what the 104th Congress is going to provide.

We heard from three panels: a panel representing doctors and hospital administrators, a hospital representing the State of New Hampshire which has to provide many Medicare and Medicaid services, and last, a panel consisting of seniors, representatives of the AARP and other groups, the United Seniors Association.

This is not an issue that we can afford to bicker about on a partisan basis because, as the President's own trustees' appointments to the Medicare trust fund state,

The Medicare program is clearly unsustainable in its present form and we strongly recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed on a comprehensive basis, including a review of the program's financing methods, benefit provisions, and delivery mechanisms.

That is precisely what my Medicare Preservation Task Force is in the process of addressing, and we heard testimony yesterday from three distinguished panels. We allowed the public half an hour to address the panel with their concerns. In August, we will be putting together a report of recommendations which we will be presenting to the House Ways and Means Committee in September.

This is the way the 104th Congress should go about solving the Medicare crisis that will confront this country, because there is not one person in this body that wants to see 33 million senior citizens lose their benefits in the 21st century.

I am proud of the Medicare Preservation Task Force. I am proud of the 104th Congress for what it has done to bring this problem to the fore and deal with these tough difficult issues. Let us get together and solve this Medicare crisis now and stop the partisan bickering.

On this 30th anniversary of Medicare, let us look to the next 30 years for a program that can be self-sustaining and provide the needed benefits to our seniors that they deserve.

HOUSING CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY] is recognized during morning business for 2½ minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, last week the Committee on Appropriations struck a mortal blow against affordable housing in this country. They were swinging at housing but they hit hundreds of thousands of elderly, disabled households and hundreds of thousands of kids and hundreds of thousands of homeless people.

Overall, their bill would cut the housing budget of this country by over 23 percent.

The Republicans are ensuring that public housing dies a slow death by cutting the funds it needs to do the routine maintenance on a day-to-day basis and then slashing by one-third the funding needed to modernize decaying buildings.

The bill kills the drug elimination grants programs, despite its outstanding success over the past few years, and the bill imposes a new minimum rents that force people living in public and assisted housing out of their homes, including elderly living on fixed incomes, many of whom will have to pay 12 to 16 percent more of their incomes toward rent. It means a thousand-dollar-a-year rent increases to most of the elderly receiving assisted housing in this country. And then to really rub salt in their wounds, it cuts the homeless budget in half.

The fact is, the vast majority of public housing authorities are well run in this country, providing safe, decent, and affordable housing to hundreds of thousands of poor people in our Nation. Yet, we see politicians that want to run out in front of some gutted old abandoned decrepit housing and make the Americans believe that that is all public housing.

There are 3,400 public housing authorities in America, only 100 of which are poorly run. There are bad housing projects and we ought to get rid of them, and we ought to get rid of the bad housing authorities, but we ought not to throw out the baby with the bath water and pretend that every single unit of public housing is these decrepit housing photo ops that we see politicians running out and taking their pictures in front of these days.

Let us stand up for the poor. Let us not abandon this country's commitment to making certain that we have a fundamental safety net in America. People look around and they see homeless people on the streets and they are outraged. The only reason we have homelessness is because we do not build affordable housing for the most vulnerable people in this country, and coming in here and wholesale just cutting out the housing budget by 23 percent makes no sense.

Let us make certain that we come at this problem and deal with it. But we are throwing away some of the most important housing in the country without looking at what makes the cheapest housing for the most amount of people.

Let us look at the problem. Let us solve it, but let us not throw it out in order to make a nice, quick fancy speech that will hurt a lot of people and will not help our country.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLIC TRUSTEES ON MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May

12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a report that has been issued by the Social Security and Medicare Board of Trustees. It is labeled, "The Status of the Social Security and Medicare Programs: A Summary of the 1995 Annual Reports."

I really want to urge, Mr. Speaker, people who are watching this on C-SPAN, every single American, regardless of whether you are a senior citizen, if you are a citizen of this country, and particularly if you are paying taxes or you are a recipient of Social Security or Medicare, you should get a copy of this report.

This report is like a summary of an annual report. It is like the summary of an annual report that a shareholder would get in a company that he or she owns shares in. Only in this case, this is the summary of the annual report for American citizens about their own government, and specifically how four trust funds are being handled and what their financial health is at this point of time.

I am going to give a phone number, too, because I really urge you very strongly to call your Representative and get a copy of this. I do not think that anybody can truly understand or assess or have a very clear picture of what is going on with Medicare if you have not read this.

It is very clear. It is well written. It is thoughtfully done. I am going to read some things from it. 202-224-3121. That is the switchboard number at the Capitol. 202-224-3121. Call it up, ask for your Representative and ask for this. It is a status of the Social Security and Medicare programs. It is a summary of the 1995 annual reports, and they will have a copy of it at their office. They will send it to you or they can clearly get a copy.

This is a report that was created by the Medicare trustees, and they include Mr. Rubin, who is the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Reich, who is the Secretary of Labor, Ms. Shalala, who is the Secretary of HHS, and then a woman named Shirley Chater, who is the Commissioner of Social Security, and two private trustees, David Walker and Stanford Ross.

They are charged with the responsibility of reporting to the Congress, to the President, and to you more than anybody else, Mr. speaker, to the American people, to the public, about the status of these trust funds.

I want to just read a couple of things that are more in a summary nature, and again encourage you to get your own copy of this because it just lays the whole thing out.

It talks about the Social Security trust fund and also the disability insurance trust fund, but the one I want to concentrate on is the Medicare trust fund. What it says is, the Medicare